

THE HOUSEHOLD IS THE KITCHEN AT LAST.

Holyoke, Mass., Has Organized All Its Cooks and Maid Servants. Preparatory to Fighting the Mistresses—Charter Has Been Granted, Rules Adopted and Officers Elected.

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REPUBLIC SPECIAL.

Oct. 24.—Into the burning of it is breaking?—house-tenant question (trades unionism has driven it entering wedge). In the West there have been several attempts to make the kitchen the ally of the workshop, but it is in the conservative East that the relation promises to become a permanent factor.

An attempt to form a national union of housekeepers was made two years ago by Miss Sophie Becker of the Root and Shoe Makers' Union.

In Wisconsin the kitchen organizing delegate has recently brought temporary notice to housewives that new movements have not done much except to give the professional housewife fresh stock.

They were not the legitimate outgrowth of the economic tendency of the time.

In Holyoke, Mass., the gauntlet has been thrown by a housewife (officially known as household employees) affiliated with the Federation of Labor.

A charter has been granted, officers have been elected and rules adopted which are intended to bring every kitchen in the "Paper City" under the union's control.

The president of the Holyoke union is Miss Mary Walsh, and the secretary Miss Nellie Lynch.

It is not an idle fancy of some pernicious theorist, but the natural outgrowth of the spirit of the age.

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SPEAKS WITH AUTHORITY. The first authority, perhaps, in this country is Miss Gail Laughlin, L. L. D., who was commissioned by the United States Industrial Commission to investigate the whole subject of housework in America.

Her deductions might be summarized in a word—make housework a trade.

"Purely economic law," she writes, "cannot be applied to the household as the home, but that the principles that apply to other industries will, to a considerable degree, apply to the household as well."

Household labor has not been put on a business basis. The household is not a business and its labor is not a business.

The testimony of many generally and the facts stated by those who come most closely in touch with domestic labor seem to establish that in a large proportion of cases the service rendered by domestic employees is largely in the hands of untrained and incompetent workers and is unremunerative.

QUESTION OF WAGES. "The reason for this is not found in the wages paid, for it is admitted that wages paid to domestic help are generally considered higher than the wages paid in many more popular lines of work."

The average cost of domestic help in America are: Men, \$6.00; women, \$4.00. The reason is found, not in the wages, but in the fact that the domestic employee is looked upon as a personal servant, not as a business employee.

Because of this there is no fixed standard of wages, the hours of service are indefinite, and the employee's entire time is subject to the control of the employer.

To improve the position of the domestic employee the supply of intelligent workers must be increased; to increase the demand for the service, the conditions of service must be modified so as to make domestic service conform to the conditions of other industries, and especially so modified as to put the domestic employee on a business basis.

In other words, domestic service must be put on a business basis.

The evils existing in domestic service arise chiefly from the fact that the domestic employee is not considered as a business employee.

If, then, we are to accept Miss Laughlin's conclusions, we must make a battle for the "business principles" of domestic service.

A PROFITABLE LOT. Unionism could not have chosen a more profitable spot than Holyoke to win its first victory in the kitchen.

The domestic problem is serious enough at any time, in any town, but the situation in a manufacturing city, where the mills offer many temptations to the domestic employee, is worthy of serious discussion.

Of the Holyoke girls interviewed by the writer nearly all declared that they were "Why do girls desert housework for factory work?" with because I have my own money and I can make a better living in a mill than I can in a kitchen.

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